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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000122

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: KIRKUK SUNNI ARABS ON KIDNAPPINGS AND ARTICLE 140

CLASSIFIED BY: Jim Bigus, PRT Team Leader, Kirkuk, DOS.  
REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On June 22, Iraqi Republican Gathering's Kirkuk office head detailed a series of kidnappings between Kurds and Sunni Arabs in Kirkuk. He used the incidents as an example of how organized the Sunni Arab population would be against the annexation of Kirkuk. He warned that Islamic groups have approached Sunni Arabs on the issue of Kirkuk. He also stated that Sunni Arabs and Turcomen are discussing plans to boycott the referendum. END SUMMARY.

#### RETALIATORY KIDNAPPINGS IN KIRKUK

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¶2. (C) On June 22, IPAO met with Iraqi Republican Gathering's (IRG) Kirkuk office head Ahmed Hamed al-Ubaydi who requested a meeting to discuss a series of kidnappings in Kirkuk. He stated that PUK security forces had kidnapped Khawla Daham who, according to Ubaydi, is the wife of "Iraqi resistance leader" Abdulrahman al-Naqshbendi, a Sunni Arab member of the Al-Bu al-Ujayl tribe from Tikrit. In response, the woman's tribe kidnapped five Kurds in Tikrit and the wife of a Kurdish military colonel in Kirkuk. At this point, according to Ubaydi, Kirkuk PUK head Jalal Jawher became involved and threatened reprisals on all Al-Bu al-Ujayl tribal members living in Kirkuk.

¶3. (SBU) Following a series of intense negotiations, Daham was turned over to General Anwar, Kurdish head of IA forces in Kirkuk, and the colonel's wife was turned over to two Arab members of the Kirkuk provincial council and an exchange was made, according to Ubaydi. Once the exchange was made everyone else was released. Ubaydi emphasized a clear distinction between the Iraqi Army and police forces (the IRG wished to "thank the police and army for their help") and the PUK security forces that he blamed for causing all the problems.

¶4. (SBU) In reference to the events Ubaydi said the Arabs were all united in opposition to this kidnapping and that if they had enough

weapons "they would be strong enough to invade Iran". When pressed for clarification he said it was a reference to how strong and united the Sunni Arab population can be when they are "pushed into a corner".

#### ISLAMIC GROUPS APPROACH SUNNI ARABS

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15. (C) Ubaydi warned that "America should be careful," because Islamic groups have been approaching Sunnis in Kirkuk and any partnership that developed from these discussions would be very dangerous for coalition forces. Ubaydi made specific reference to the fact that former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Ja'afari had sent an invitation to several leaders in the Hewija community (including the head of the Hewija council and Kirkuk Arab council members) to discuss the future of Kirkuk. When asked his opinion of the meeting, Ubaydi said that "all Islamic groups are killers and they have one goal in mind and that is to kill." He painted all groups with the same brush stating that Badr, the Mahdi Army, Ansar al-Islam, Ansar al-Sunna, and any other "Islamic group" are killers.

#### KIRKUK REFERENDUM

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16. (SBU) Ubaydi used the kidnapping incident as an example of how dangerous the annexation of Kirkuk would be to a united Sunni Arab population. He predicted that half a million citizens will be killed if Kirkuk is annexed to the Kurdistan Regional Government. Ubaydi believes that Kirkuk should be administered as an independent province and remain under United Nations control for a period of ten years, using the situation in Bosnia as an example.

17. (C) In reference to the PM's statements and proposed deadlines on the implementation of Article 140, Ubaydi believes that all provinces must be redrawn, not only Kirkuk province. When asked about support for the Kirkuk Arabs in Baghdad, Ubaydi admitted that even the Sunni Arab bloc in Baghdad has stated that they will support the Kurds on the issue of Kirkuk. He noted that the Kirkuk Arabs were alone in their fight and politically cornered on the issue of Kirkuk. When asked about the Turcomen in Kirkuk, Ubaydi said the Arabs and Turcomen were working on an agreement and strategy for the upcoming referendum. When pressed to divulge details of the planning his answers became vague, though he alluded to the fact that the two communities (Turcoman and Arab) were developing a plan to boycott the referendum.

COMMENT

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¶8. (C) Arrests made by KDP and PUK "security forces" continues to be a major problem in Kirkuk. Citizens do not recognize the legitimacy of the detentions and consider the action kidnapping and therefore attempt to retaliate in a like manner.  
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